

Navy Reserve, and for the years he put in as a staff member to Congressman John Porter, for the work he did in the House of Representatives representing the 10th Congressional District, and for his term in the United States Senate. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve with him. Despite our political differences, I count him as a friend, as an ally, and as a true champion for the State of Illinois.

I wish my colleague MARK KIRK the very best in his future endeavors.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to voice my support of the extension of the Iran Sanctions Act, which I believe we must treat as just one step in our continued efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing and nefarious actions throughout the world. This bill merely extends the basis of our extensive sanctions network against Iran aimed at crippling the Ayatollah's deadly pursuit of a nuclear weapon for 10 years.

The Iran Sanctions Act, which is part of the extensive network of sanctions that I helped author for the United States and our allies to levy against the Iranian regime, serves as the basis of the economic leverage that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have authored and championed the foundation of our network of sanctions that crippled Iran's economy and kept its nuclear pursuits at bay. It has been my consistent position that the United States must address these nefarious activities apart from the nuclear portfolio. We need to send a signal to Iran that the United States, while meeting its obligations under the JCPOA, will continue to respond to other threatening and dangerous activities the Iranian regime has taken.

Throughout debate over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, its proponents made a number of repeated claims. Among these were that it was crippling sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table and that in the event of a breach of the agreement, the United States and our implementing partners would have every authority to "snap back"—the term that was coined—the sanctions that have been lifted. If the sanctions architecture has expired, then we have no sanctions which we can snap back. These sanctions were in place when the JCPOA was authored and signed, and it follows that they should remain in place.

Many of the agreement's proponents argued that putting the JCPOA in

place would give the United States and our allies the opportunity to focus on countering Iran's more conventional threats to American security and regional stability. Since the nuclear agreement came into force, Iran has continued its efforts to destabilize the region and increase its power through proxy and terrorist networks.

Since we signed the nuclear agreement with Iran, Iran has been testing the agreement, testing our resolve, and quite literally testing long-range ballistic missiles. We have seen multiple ballistic missile tests in the past year and a half—in October and November of last year and in March and May of this year and one launch not far from U.S. naval vessels. We have seen American sailors humiliated and detained at gunpoint. Just this weekend, a vessel controlled by the IRGC—the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—pointed a weapon at a U.S. military helicopter in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran continues to support a Houthi insurgency that toppled the legitimate Government of Yemen. It supports Shia militias in Iraq who seek to control the democratically elected Iraqi Government and bring it closer in line with Iran, threatening to return Iraq to civil war or worse. It supports Assad in Syria and continues to send millions of dollars and sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas, threatening innocent civilians in Syria and Israel's security. It continues human rights violations and sustains an aging clergy who is losing touch with the hopes and dreams of young Iranians and moderates, an out-of-touch clergy who dominates the power structures and the security apparatus that restricts civil liberties and promotes its hegemonic regional destabilization. It has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East, capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, biological weapons, and continues to develop cyber war capabilities.

Iran continues its development of space-launch vehicles that can lead to a longer range missile capability. It has cooperated with North Korea on the transfer of ballistic missile technology. This is in addition to the fact that Iran has, by its own admission, violated the JCPOA itself. The International Atomic Agency reported that Iran has twice violated the terms of the agreement by producing more heavy water than the deal allows for. An excess stockpile of heavy water—a critical component of operating nuclear reactors—reduces Iran's nuclear breakout time. Yet, even with this violation, the United States and our implementing partners have upheld our end of the bargain.

As I have repeatedly said and which I outlined in the bill I authored earlier this year, we must take decisive action in response to Iran's behavior which is in violation, among other things, of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and threatens America's inter-

ests and regional stability. The United States must reserve the right to hold Iran accountable for all of its actions, and that is exactly what my legislation would do by imposing stricter sanctions tied to specific nefarious actions outside the nuclear portfolio.

After months of consultations with my colleagues in the Senate, outside experts, and constituents, I introduced a bipartisan bill, S. 3267, the Countering Iranian Threats Act, on July 14, just before Congress broke for recess. Its acronym, CITA, not only extends the Iran Sanctions Act, which we will do independently today, it also expands sanctions for ballistic missile development, support for terrorism, and other illicit Iranian actions, and it sanctions transfers of conventional weapons to or from Iran—the totality of Iran's dangerous behavior outside of the nuclear portfolio. Specifically, it requires the administration to identify the specific Iranians, persons, or entities that are engaged in these activities and then apply sanctions that freeze their assets and block their international travel and business interests. In this way, the sanctions are surgical and designed to avoid interference with the terms of the Iran nuclear deal.

We must provide leverage to seek necessary change in the conduct of the Iranian regime and hold Iran accountable for meeting its international obligations, including the terms of the JCPOA. We will improve the deplorable human rights situation in Iran and double down on our reassurances to Israel and American allies in the region of our full commitment to regional security.

The fact is, there is much we can do to ensure a bright future undimmed by a nuclear cloud. We must authorize the Iran Sanctions Act that I have authored so that, as flawed as the JCPOA was, in my view, the Iranians will know the consequences of any breach and we will deal with missile proliferation, terrorism, and regional destabilization that is just as dangerous and just as threatening to American security and to our ally, the State of Israel, and our other allies in the region. I hope we will get to that new phase in the next Congress.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today on another topic that is affecting every single State represented here in this Chamber, and that is the opioid epidemic. This is heroin, prescription